

Lesson Plan

Shaping Stories

Book: *Xi Jinping*

Series: World Leaders

Level: Voyager

Objective

To help students practice identifying how the information an author chooses to include or exclude affects readers' perception of a text, and to examine the author's reasons for making such choices when writing a text.

Supplies

- *Xi Jinping* book
- *Kim Jong Un* book (optional)
- Person of Impact handout (attached)
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Have students read the *Xi Jinping* book.

Activity

The *Xi Jinping* book examines the life and career of China's president and the role he plays in global politics today. Part of a politician's job involves dealing with the country's relationships with other nations. As a result, politicians may impact the careers of other leaders. For example, China and North Korea are located fairly close together. As a result, China is impacted by the decisions of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Xi Jinping has had to decide how to interact with Kim Jong Un. Today, students will learn more about this relationship.

Divide students into groups of three or four. If you have the *Kim Jong Un* book, have each group turn to pages 40 and 41 and read the "Person of Impact" feature about Xi Jinping. If you do not have the *Kim Jong Un* book, print and distribute the Person of Impact handout (attached).

Ask students to read this brief biography of Xi Jinping. Then, students should discuss the similarities and differences between this brief biography and the *Xi Jinping* book. They should discuss the following questions, writing their answers on a separate sheet of paper:

1. What information does this "Person of Impact" feature choose to include?
2. Why do you think the book's author chose these facts?

3. What information does this feature leave out?
4. Why do you think the book's author chose to omit those facts?
5. How do the author's choices about what information to include and what information to leave out affect the way readers will view Xi Jinping after reading the feature?
6. Do you think this perspective is the same as the perspective readers would get after reading the *Xi Jinping* book?
7. If you had written the "Person of Impact" feature, would you have chosen to include different information? Why or why not?

Give each group a few minutes to discuss their answers. Then come back together as a large group. Go through the questions, calling on students from different groups to give their group's answer to each question. Choose a few different students to answer question 7.

Optional: If you have the *Kim Jong Un* book, have students read that book. Then, they should use the information in that book to write a "Person of Impact" feature (200 words) about Kim Jong Un. Students should imagine that this feature will replace the feature about Li Zhanshu on pages 38 to 39 of the *Xi Jinping* book. This should guide what information they choose to include or exclude.

Evaluation

Were students able to identify the differences between the two accounts of Xi Jinping's life? Could they identify how these choices affected readers' perceptions? Could they produce reasonable guesses as to why the author might have made these choices?

Optional: Give each student up to 10 points for including accurate, relevant information in their own "Person of Impact" feature about Kim Jong Un.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading informational texts standards, grade 7 (RI 7.9) and the National Council for Social Studies Standard 9.

Person of Impact

Focus on Xi Jinping

Similar to North Korea, the People's Republic of China is a Communist country. The nation has been one of North Korea's closest allies. In 2013, Xi Jinping became the president of China.

Xi was likely born in 1953. His father was a companion of Mao Zedong, the legendary Chinese Communist leader. In 1974, Xi joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In the following years, Xi held a series of jobs in the CCP. In 2008, Xi was elected vice president of China.

China's size and power in the world make the nation a useful ally to North Korea. During the Korean War, China provided North Korea with support. But in recent years, the relationship between the two countries has weakened.

While Kim Jong Il visited China often, Kim Jong Un and Xi are not in close contact. Some analysts think the leaders' lack of relationship stems from their large age difference. Compared to Xi, Kim Jong Un is young and inexperienced.

Kim's weapons testing is a major source of tension between the two leaders. While not a target of the weapons, China is dangerously close to Kim's testing areas. The country would be placed in even more danger if Kim's activity resulted in war.

(from pp. 40–41 of *Kim Jong Un* by Russell Roberts)